SOLITUDE:

OR, THE

ELYSIUM of the POETS,

A

VISION;

TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED

An ELEGY.

By John Ogilvie D.D. Minister of Midmar in Aberdeenshire.

ΟΝΑΡ ΕΚ ΔΙΟΣ ΕΣΤΙ. HOM.

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To the Right Honourable

JAMES

EARL of HOPETOUN,

Etc. Etc. Etc.

The following Poem,

in Testimony

of Esteem for the most Valuable

Qualities,

and of Gratitude

For that Patronage of the Arts,

which Constitutes

the Noblest Exercise

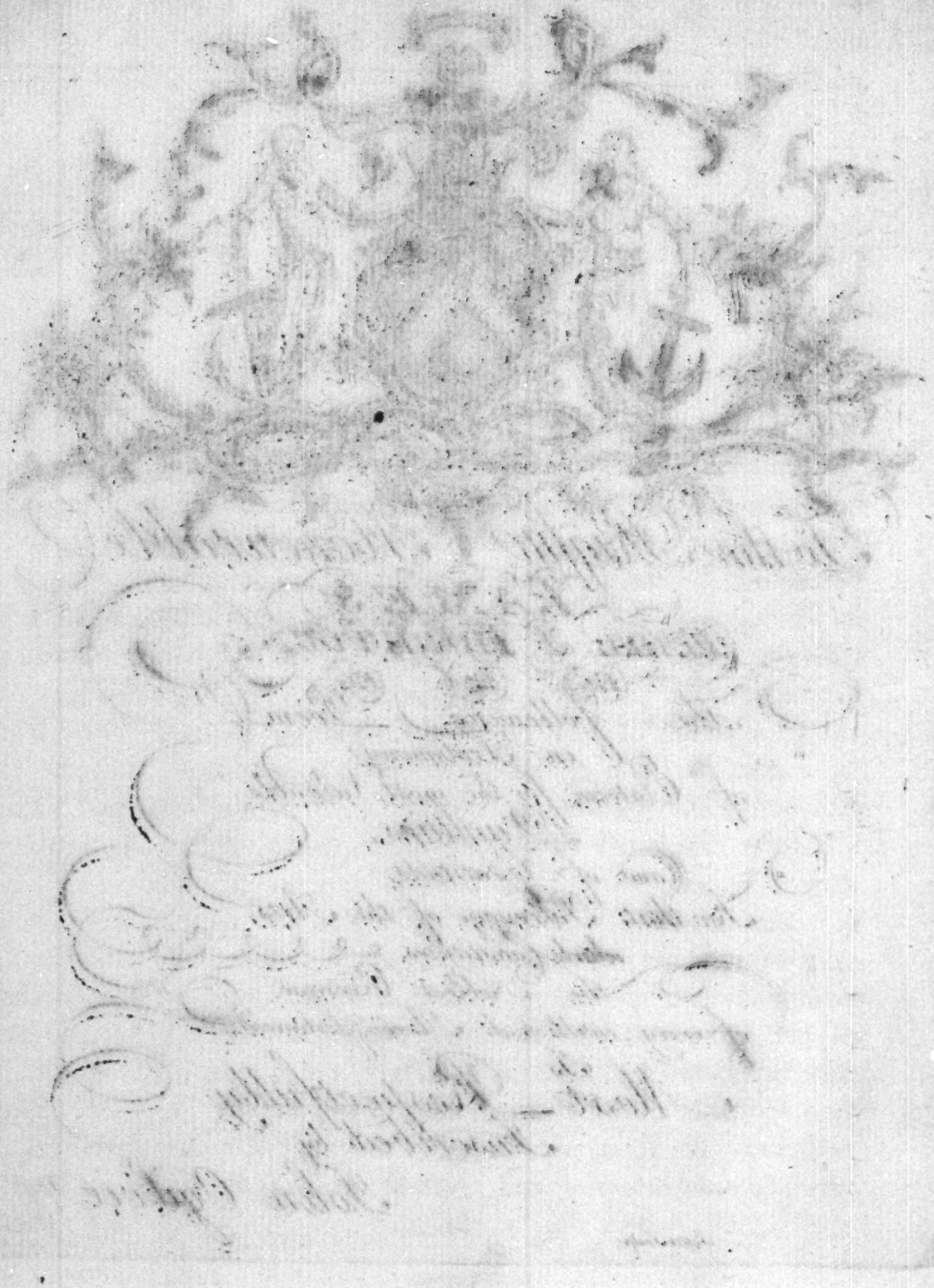
of every intellectual Accomplishment,

Is Most Respectfully

Inscribed by

John Ogilvie.

Sutters Sculp.



INTRODUCTION.

IT is the deſign of the following Poem to give the Engliſh reader an idea, in as ſhort a compaſs as poſſible, of the character, merit, and diſcriminating excellencies of the moſt eminent Britiſh Poets. As the Author was originally prompted to form this deſign by that love to his Country, of which every mind is in ſome meaſure ſuſceptible, he will not, conſcious as he is of this partiality, venture to decide upon the comparative merit of Great Britain, conſidered as the Rival of *foreign Nations*, in the production of Writers of diſtinguiſhed genius. The truth is, a *true Poet* is a character ſo very uncommon, that in the happieſt concurrence of favourable circumſtances, no Nation whatever can boaſt of having often produced it. An eminent degree of any intellectual faculty appears not frequently, nor is it neceſſary that it ſhould. The Author cannot however avoid taking notice, on this ſubject, of the wiſe diſtribution which takes place among mankind with regard to the faculties of the human mind. Conſidered as Members of a Community ſupported by juſt and neceſſary regulations, the qualification requiſite either to form an inſtitution, to judge of its expediency, or to apply its rules to particular circumſtances, is ſurely *a comprehenſive* and *penetrating Judgment*. This faculty

therefore we obſerve to be more univerſally, and even (conſidering men in general) more equally conferred than any other. The degrèe of *Invention* (for it ought to be obſerved, that there are many degrees of it which are not accompanied by a talent for compoſition) that is neceſſary to the diſcovery or improvement of ſuch objects as render life agreeable by augmenting its conveniencies, is likewiſe beſtowed promiſcuouſly upon many individuals; and becauſe it hath been ſo, is not perhaps regarded in proportion to its intrinſic merit. That ſpecies (or to ſpeak more philoſophically) that exertion of Imagination, which leads the Writer to form the moſt exquiſite reſemblances, and to combine the moſt delicate proportions, as it ultimately tends to *pleaſe* thoſe who are previouſly ſuppoſed to have been inſtructed, and as it can only exiſt in its full perfection in ſome improved ſtate of Society, is diſtributed leſs indiſcriminately among mankind; and a Few appear to be conſidered as ſufficient to effectuate every purpoſe which it propoſeth to accompliſh. Without aſcertaining particularly the preciſe meaning of the word *Genius*, it will be univerſally allowed, that the combination of theſe two faculties in their utmoſt vigour, conſtitutes the higheſt ſphere of excellence which the human mind can poſſibly obtain. The records of Antiquity preſent us only with two inſtances of this great combination in an Homer and Virgil; to which our own country can oppoſe theſe of Shakeſpear, Milton, Oſſian, and Spencer.

The critical Reader, who, after this repreſentation, may be ready to accuſe the Author of preſumption, for attempting to exhibit the characters of theſe laſt mentioned Writers, with a variety of diction, imagery, and ſentiment, correſponding in ſome degree to the *manner* of each, ought to remember, that it does not ſurely follow, that becauſe an Author delineates a character with juſtice and propriety, he therefore claims a ſhare

of *that merit* which diſtinguiſhed his Original. We would commend the qualities which an Hiſtorian might diſplay in deſcribing the actions and characters of a Turenne, or a Colbert; but we would not certainly conclude, even though the performance ſhould be happily executed, that the Writer expected to be regarded as an illuſtrious Hero, or a conſummate Stateſman.

In order however to give the ſeveral Figures in the following piece, as nearly as poſſible, their juſt proportions and importance, the Author hath endeavoured to deſcribe each of theſe in that manner which he conceived to be moſt ſuitable; and with that drapery, which he ſuppoſed to be at once the juſteſt, and the moſt ornamental. With this view it was, that inſtead of giving ſimply a detail of the writings of theſe great Geniuſes, and of inſiſting particularly upon their ſeparate excellencies, he hath contrived a kind of poetical Elyſium as the place of their reſidence; and hath attempted to impreſs ſome idea of their characters upon the mind of the Reader, by adjuſting the *external ſcenery* to *the manners* of the Perſon who is ſuppoſed to be placed in it. After this apparatus, *the Bard* is introduced in an attitude adapted to this ſtrain of compoſition; and he amuſes himſelf in his Elyſium, by reciting to the muſic of the pipe, or the lyre, the different ſubjects of which he had formerly treated. The Author propoſed indeed, at firſt, to have made each of the Poets ſpeak in his own perſon, and reſume ſome part of his works, in a ſtile ſomewhat ſimilar to that which we might conceive him to employ. Though this method is really taken in the caſe of Pope, Thomſon, and Denham; yet he found upon reflection, that a conſtant adherence to it would not only have ſpoiled the Reader's entertainment, by rendering the *narrative part* of the Poem altogether diſproportioned to the *deſcriptive*; but after all, the happieſt execution (unleſs he had run the narration to a very great length) could

have

have conveyed no adequate idea of the different ſpecies of poetical compoſition in which ſome of them excelled. Upon the whole, therefore, he determined to make uſe of both methods; ſometimes narrating himſelf the themes of the Poet, and ſometimes making *him* inſiſt at length, upon thoſe which are either in themſelves moſt important, or in which he excelled moſt particularly, as anſwering moſt fully the deſign of this work.

Though the Author propoſed, by taking the courſe already mentioned, to avoid an extreme on either ſide; yet he is ſufficiently aware, that ſome Readers will cenſure him for having rendered, at leaſt, the firſt part of the Poem almoſt wholly *deſcriptive*. They will be apt to ſuggeſt, that even the richeſt imagery dazzles and fatigues the mind, when the ſeries of moral obſervation does not, upon ſome occaſions, contribute to relieve it. Without diſputing the truth of this general remark, the Writer would only vindicate his own conduct in the preſent inſtance from its being unavoidable. The ſcene with which the Poem opens, the cell of Solitude, the climes through which ſhe paſſed, and the Elyſium into which ſhe opened an admiſſion; — theſe objects naturally require the graces of deſcription, perhaps in a much higher degree than they are beſtowed in this poem. As to the Poets themſelves, the Author hath endeavoured to ſpeak of them with propriety, and to make thoſe who recite the ſubjects of their own Writings, run into ſuch a vein of *ſentiment*, as he conceived to be leaſt unappropriated to their ſeparate profeſſions. The moral obſervations which ariſe from particular parts, he chooſed rather to throw together in a connected ſeries at *the end*, than to *ſcatter looſely* though the work.

In diſcuſſing the ſeveral parts of a plan in itſelf ſo complicated, and requiring a ſtile of compoſition ſo conſtantly diverſified; in ſuch a performance, the Reader who ſhall expect to ſee *equal juſtice* done to every character, and his own idea of it perfectly

perfectly exhibited, will form an expectation which no effort whatever will compleatly gratify. Admitting that the Author of the following Attempt, may have ſpoke too ſlightly of a favourite Poet, and too warmly of one to whom his Reader will allow a leſs ſhare of merit; yet ſurely the Perſon who makes this remark, will be polite enough to indulge another (when he is not groſsly faulty) in prejudices ſimilar, perhaps, to thoſe which he enjoys himſelf without cenſure. He will permit him to beſtow the moſt lively colouring, not merely where acknowledged ſuperiority rendered it expedient, but where he found it eaſieſt to catch a *particular manner*, from ſome real or ſuppoſed reſemblance which it might have to *his own.*

Another ſet of Readers may probably, at firſt view, be offended with the *order* in which the Poets are arranged; Milton being ſeemingly preferred to Shakeſpear, as Thomſon is to Pope. Without enquiring into the comparative merit of theſe Writers, which would be altogether improper here, the Author would only obſerve, that he placed them in their preſent order, to avoid that uniformity of deſcription which muſt have reſulted from any other diſpoſition. The *ſimilarity* of character betwixt Shakeſpear and Spencer (both of whom were more indebted to Nature than to Education) would have unavoidably occaſioned a *correſponding ſimiliarity* of imagery and ſentiment, had the one of theſe immediately followed the other; an inconveniency which is wholly ſuperſeded, by placing Milton betwixt them. —The peculiar circumſtances of Oſſian diſcriminate him ſufficiently from *all* other Poets. Pope ſtands indeed betwixt Thomſon and Dryden, as the Eſſay on Man affords a noble train of ſentiments to ſum up the illuſtrious detail of the moſt eminent Britiſh Poets; and the two laſt mentioned differ ſo much, at leaſt in point of correctneſs, that it was eaſy to diverſify the ſcenery in which they are placed.

Thus

Thus the Public hath a full view of the principles upon which the following little work hath been planned and conducted. Let it be obſerved, that he pretends not to have deſcribed *the whole* of this poetical Region, in which the names of ſome Writers of the preſent age might appear with dignity. Should any of theſe think proper to ſupply the defects of the preſent attempt, by a more compleat, or maſterly performance on ſo copious a ſubject, the Author (incapable as he is, either of envy or malignity) will rejoice to ſee honour done to his Country, through whatever channel it is conveyed.

It is only neceſſary to add further, that the Elegy which is ſubjoined to this Poem, was wrote upon an occaſion in which the Author was particularly and deeply intereſted. It contains the character of a worthy and amiable Nobleman, in which the pencil of Flattery hath not ſtrengthened a ſingle feature. It has no great ſhare of *deſcriptive merit*, as the heart ſeldom adopts the images of Imagination to expreſs the feeling by which it is affected.

SOLITUDE:

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OR,

The ELYSIUM of the POETS.

COME from the climes of light, celeſtial Maid!
Thou whoſe gay viſions bleſs my nightly dream:
Lo! what bright ſcenes fair opening claim thine aid,
How Fancy glows o'er each tranſporting theme!

Not now to ſing of *God's eternal ways* *,
I ſweep the ſwelling lyre's melodious ſtrings:
More ſweetly varying flow th' inſpiring lays:
Grant melting notes, and ſtrong yet temperate wings.

* The Subject of Providence, a Poem. See Book 1. ab init.

To tell what bards have bleſs'd Britannia's clime,
Each beaming mild like Eve's refulgent ſtar,
The Muſe attempts; to paint her race ſublime
In ſong unequall'd, as unmatch'd in war.

What time the Queen of Silence, and of Night,
Steals meekly penſive from Endymion's bower,
Illumes the broider'd lawn with ſilver light,
Or hears the lone owl on ſome blaſted tower,

Muſing I roved, and mark'd the ſolemn ſcene.
No cloud obſcured th' unbounded arch above;
Huſh'd was each murmur o'er the ſtill ſerene,
And calm the warblers of the vocal grove:

All but the wakeful Philomel.—Alone
She ſat; and wailing from th' aereal bough
Mellifluous, pour'd her deeply plaintive moan,
The moan that thrills the dying ear of Woe.

Far in a dark wood's ſolitary maze,
Where the pine trembled o'er the murmuring rill,
Led ſoft, my rapt eye mark'd the ſtreamy rays,
That glimmering tinged the wild o'er-arching hill.

At laſt, where Nature form'd a moſſy ſeat
I ſtay'd, and eager drunk th' inchanting ſound:
Calm Silence, hovering o'er the deep retreat,
Lull'd to the plaint the ſolemn waſte around.

Then trilling ceaſed the dying note.—Awhile
The ſtrain ſtill languiſh'd on the liſtening ear;
Till Fancy kindling, with benignant ſmile
Waked her wild harp, and call'd the woods to hear.

" O Ye, whom Nature's genial charms inſpire,
(Thus ſpoke the Goddeſs of the thought ſublime)
" Who nobly ardent feel diviner fire,
" Whoſe hope o'erſhoots the lingering flight of Time!

" Ye noble Few! whom not the ſplendid pride
" Of wealth allures, nor Grandeur's tinſell'd plume;
" Whoſe hearts to bleeding ſympathy allied,
" Can melt o'er Virtue's unlamented tomb:

" Ye, who thro' Modeſty's involving veil
" Can mark the features of a godlike mind,
" Snatch Genius pining from the cottaged dale,
" Or feeling wake to tranſports all refined:

" O come! eſcaped from Folly's buſtling train:
" Not theſe have eyed bright Fancy's genial ray,
" Nor felt ſweet tranſport in each throbbing vein,
" Nor died deep-pierced to Love's diſſolving lay.

" Th' ingenuous bluſh that ſpeaks the ſoul ſincere,
" The living ardour of the mind's keen eye,
" On Pity's cheek the ſlow-deſcending tear,
" And ſtealing from the heart the tender ſigh,

" 'Tis

" 'Tis mine to give. Though from the ſtarry throne,
" Whence Power high-raiſed the rolling world ſurveys,
" Stoops not her ear to Woe's unheeded moan,
" Nor Genius baſks in her enlivening rays;

" Yet, where wild Solitude's reſounding dome
" Lies deep and ſilent in the woodland ſhade,
" Sweet Peace with devious ſtep delights to roam,
" And ſoft-reclining reſts her gentle head.

" And Thou, whoſe feet to this deſerted bower
" Have ſtray'd; if mild Benevolence is thine,
(To me thus ſmiling ſpoke the heavenly power)
" If warm thou bow'ſt at Virtue's ſacred ſhrine;

" If thy thrill'd heart with ſympathetic woe
" Hath bled (for man is deſtined to endure;)
" If others anguiſh bade thine eyes o'erflow,
" If prone to feel the grief thou can'ſt not cure;

" With me retire. Lo! to the clime remote
" I lead, where yet to human ſtep unknown,
" The power who lifts to God th' aſpiring thought,
" Rapt Solitude hath rear'd her ſolemn throne.

" What ſcenes ſhall then thy wondering ſight behold!
" Yet know that toils, that perils go before:
" The firm of mind, the reſolute, the bold,
" Brave the rude ſtorm, and reach th' appointed ſhore."

She ſpoke. Her airy wings expanded wide,
The wan ray trembling on the ſilver plume,
Shot where a hollow rock's high-arching ſide
Stood lone and ſilent as the deſert tomb.

There ſullen Darkneſs fix'd her dire abode:
Black clouds involving wrapt her gloomy cell:
While as her ſlow hand waved a Stygian rod,
Wail'd thro' th' impervious gulph the fiends of hell.

There pined pale Envy in the cavern dun,
  There Time deep-furrowing plough'd the front of Care;
Deſpair with curſes eyed the winking moon,
  And Frenzy howling tore her tangled hair.

Theſe, as the radiant Goddeſs flaſh'd along,
  Shrunk from the ray that lighten'd o'er her frame:
Such rapid fate diſſolves the inſect throng,
  When the black whirlwind rides the wings of Flame.

At laſt emerging from th' abyſs of night,
  Again pale Cynthia pour'd her ſilver beam,
Where bloom'd a lawn fair as the early light,
  That firſt weak-glimmering tinged the glaſſy ſtream.

O'er its looſe robe, all balmy as the dew
  That bathes Aurora's dropping locks, were ſeen
The tribes profuſe of each reſplendent hue,
  That glowing paints the rich enamell'd green.

There hung the violet its dejected head,
The lily languiſh'd to the ſighing gale;
While daiſies ſprinkled o'er their velvet bed,
And painted cowſlips ſmiled along the dale.

Sweet haunt of Quiet! When thy ſearch in vain
Hath roam'd the city vaſt, or diſtant hill,
Lull'd by lone Philomel's deſponding ſtrain,
Thought finds her ſleeping near the purling rill.

Dim as the fleeting viſions of the night,
A dark tower tottering cloſed th' extended view;
While round its ſpires, illumed with feeble light,
The flitting bat and boding raven flew.

Rent was the hanging arch, the domes o'erthrown;
Nor tread was heard along the deſert pile,
Save when the troubled ghoſt with hollow moan
Strode ſlowly o'er the long-reſounding iſle.

One only cell withſtood the waſte of Time:
'Twas where a turret rear'd its moſs-clad brow:
Gloomy it ſtood, in fading pomp ſublime,
And ſhew'd the mouldering wrecks that frown'd below.

Here, on her hand her drooping head reclined,
Wrapt in deep muſing ſat the lonely Power;
Penſive ſhe ſat, and heard the howling wind
Die faintly murmuring round her ivy'd bower.

In graceful ringlets fell her amber hair;
Black as the raven's plumes her mantle flow'd;
No Cupids round her fann'd the ſullen air,
Nor feſtive Echo chear'd her lone abode.

But the wild harp that to the blaſt complains *,
Soothed with melodious plaint her raptured ear:
Deep, ſolemn, awful roll'd the varying ſtrains,
Such ſtrains as Seraphim with tranſport hear.

* The Harp of Æolus.

For theſe deſcending oft, a radiant throng,
The rapt Power bending from her ebon throne,
Sublime in glorious viſion ſail along,
And talk of themes to mortal man unknown.

Her ſerious eye, as Fancy's form was ſeen,
A placid ſmile illumed. Serene ſhe ſaid,
" Why from the bowers of bliſs, inchanting Queen,
" Strays thy loved ſtep to this ſequeſter'd ſhade?

" And whence thy Follower?—To my haunt repair
" Few, yet elate in Life's delightful prime,
" But thoſe who pale with grief, or whelm'd with care,
" Have felt the cankering tooth of waſteful Time."

" Thine, (thus the Queen of every grace replied)
" Thine is the tribe that wakes the warbling lyre;
" Thy charms the Muſe's ſweeteſt ſong ſupplied,
" Thy thought exalts her, and thy groves inſpire.

" By

" By me convey'd this inexperienced Gueſt
" Attends:—To guide his future hours, diſplay
" The ſcenes where now with eaſe, with freedom bleſt,
" Thy happy offſpring ſhare the climes of day.

" Shew where reclined beneath embowering ſhades
" Thy ſons, BRITANNIA! ſtrike the trembling ſtring;
" Safe where no ſtorm the peaceful haunt invades,
" The boundleſs foreſts echoing as they ſing.

" I to the cliff that overhangs the main
" Retire: my hands a ſylvan maze have wove,
" Where Shakeſpear, pouring his unlabour'd ſtrain,
" Sees Nature liſtening with a parent's love."

She ſaid, and vaniſh'd. But her voice divine
Smiling ſerene the thoughtful Power obey'd;
Silent ſhe left her ſolitary ſhrine,
And o'er the waſte, a pathleſs journey, led.

Deep was the gloom, as thro' ſurrounding woods,
Thro' walks impervious to the noon-day blaze,
O'er rocks that tottering felt the torrent floods,
O'er lawns illumed by Cynthia's ſilver rays,

O'er wilds we trod, where Winter's freezing hand
Chills the bleak mountains with eternal ſnow,
O'er climes where Famine waſtes the barren land,
O'er caves that ſhake while Earthquakes rowl below.

To Night's remoteſt verge at laſt we came;
When lo! rejoicing as her veil withdrew,
Another region, yet unknown to fame,
A new horizon dazzling ruſh'd to view.

From the tall ſummit of an arching hill,
Wondering I ſaw the glorious ſcenes unfold;
Thro' groves of citron crept the amber rill,
Where flamed the yellow boughs with downy gold.

A garden here, in vernal beauty bright,
Shook muſky fragrance on the ſcented gale:
There waved the brown wood on the darkening ſight,
Or Zephyr fluttering ſkimm'd the lilied vale.

Now loſt in wildneſs was the wandering eye,
Now pierced the ſhady bower's incumbent gloom;
Soothed as the joyous Spring ſtood bluſhing nigh,
Or rapt as Summer breathed her deepening bloom.

Each ſhade a Bard, with wreathing laurel crown'd,
Poſſeſs'd; and near the ſeats of Pleaſure roſe:
Luxuriant Beauty ſhower'd her growth around,
What copious growth Elyſian lawns diſcloſe.

* Juſt where the hill (theſe happy manſions ſhown)
O'erlook'd the pendent trees that waved between;
On the fair borders of that temperate zone,
Tho' rude, yet graceful, ſmiled a ruſtic ſcene.

Rich,

* *Juſt where the hill*, &c.] Here the principal ſubject of the Poem begins with a

Rich, yet confuſed, the intermingling ſprays,
Uncouthly gay, their ſimple flowers diſplay'd;
Nor here had Faſhion plann'd the wildering maze,
Nor Art's ſoft touch th' entangling ſhrubs obey'd.

But o'er the whole majeſtic Nature ſtrode,
Her form diſdainful of the mimic hand:
The brightening Wilderneſs before her glow'd,
Behind gay Plenty clothed the broider'd land.

A little hamlet in the midſt appear'd,
Where antique figures ſtood expoſed to view;
Of rough materials was the ſtructure rear'd,
And round its walls the claſping ivy grew. Not

a deſcription of Chaucer. It is neceſſary to obſerve, that the author does not attempt in ſpeaking of the more ancient Britiſh poets to imitate the obſolete ſtyle in which they wrote. He is of opinion that the natural arrangement of the ſcenery in which they are placed, and a correſponding ſimplicity of expreſſion, will convey to the reader a more juſt idea of their characters and manners, than he could receive from the moſt accurate imitation of their diction. It was the misfortune of theſe great geniuſes to live at a time, when the language of their country was harſh and uncultivated. If we look on it as faulty and defective, it is ſurely the buſineſs of any writer who would imitate their manner, rather to clothe ſentiments as ſimilar as poſſible to theirs, in ſuch language as they might be ſuppoſed to write in the preſent age, than to introduce an exploded and barbarous phraſeology into a language, which it has taken ſo much time and labour to render harmonious and elegant. In compliance however with the general taſte, a few idioms of this kind are admitted here.

Not far a laurel's ſpreading boughs were ſeen,
Beneath whoſe umbrage ſat a careleſs Swain:
The Dryads tripping o'er the daiſied green,
And bleating flocks confeſs'd his powerful ſtrain.

Much ſung the Swain of love, and much of care,
Much of th' imperious Wife, the Man forſworn;
Much of the Dotard tame, th' inſidious Fair,
The plan projected, and the gilded horn:

How oft the Nymph her ancient mate beguiles;
Soothes when he ſtorms, or chuckles as he leers;
When rouſed eludes him with ſuperior wiles,
Or jealous,—burſts in thunder on his ears.

Thus paſs'd his laughing hours in eaſe away,
Where ſtill new hopes the reſtleſs mind employ;
Nor clouds dark-lowering quench the beams of day,
Nor Sorrow ſkulks beneath the ſmile of Joy.

"Lo!

" Lo! there the Father of the Britiſh lyre,
" Old Chaucer lives, (thus ſpoke the Power divine)
" Awful, tho' rude. The venerable Sire
" Tranſported marks his long-deſcending line."

She ceaſed :—For near I mark'd a Fairy train,
Like clouds gay-gleaming mid th' aereal blue ;
In floating radiance o'er th' illumined plain,
A glittering tribe, the light Aſſembly flew.

The mingling hues that tinge the ſhowery bow,
The dew that trembles to the ſpangling ray ;
The tints that o'er the ſpreading tulip glow,
The topaz flaming to the orient ray ;

Such blended dies their ſilky wings unfold :
Young Zephyr wanton'd o'er the gilded plume ;
Bright was the ſcene with azure, green, and gold,
And round the varied landſkip breathed perfume.

Where

Where Art with Nature's rich luxuriance ſtrove,
Half-pruned, half-rambling roſe the leafy ſprays;
A Shepherd Swain, amid the gloomy grove,
Play'd wildly-ſweet his ſimple roundelays.

Of hardy Knight he told, of Fairy Queen,
Of Lover wan by weeping brook reclined,
Of Wizard old that ſpread his nets unſeen,
Of Damſel fair to wicked wight reſign'd;

Of *Una* meek, by cauſeleſs woes oppreſs'd,
As o'er the howling waſte ſhe roam'd forlorn;
Yet Guilt no tenant of her gentle breaſt,
But her's the tear of tender Pity born.

Ah woe the while!—To Loſel looſe betray'd,
Not the torn treſſes of her raven hair,
No pray'r avail'd the dear unhappy Maid,
Nor the deep groans of Anguiſh and Deſpair.

Meanwhile around him hung the ſhining throng,
So ſweetly-various flow'd th' inchanting ſtrain;
The Fay that bore his laurel wreath along
Was rapt, and ſtretch'd her eager arm in vain.

Not till the Swain's melodious plaint was o'er,
Ceaſed the ſoft, ſilent, ſympathetic tear;
The Syrens warbling from the vocal ſhore,
Thrill'd with ſuch melting notes th' enraptured ear.

But now a Garden, like that Eden fair,
Where firſt weak Eve the wily Foe beguiled,
Unbounded, floating to the balmy air,
In all the pride of glowing Beauty ſmiled.

On loaded trees the cluſtering fruitage hung,
Ambroſia dropping from the mellow bough;
The plumy race harmonious anthems ſung,
Or ſip'd the nectar'd rill that ſtream'd below.

What Summer views in all her gay domain,
What Fable's airy pencil ere beſtow'd,
Whate'er Elyſium's happy fields contain,
In rich profuſion crown'd this bleſt abode.

Nor yet wild-ſcattering ſpread th' exhauſtleſs ſtore,
But Taſte to range the copious growth combined;
Wild Fancy ſtoop'd to Reaſon's gentle lore,
And Nature's boon informing Art refined.

One tree o'er all ſublime in grandeur ſtood:
So towers on Lebanon's exalted brow
A Cedar old, and ſees the riſing wood
Around its venerable Parent grow.

Beneath its ſhade, where ſigh'd the dying Gale,
Repoſed an Inmate of th' ethereal ſkies;
With wavy radiance flamed his feather'd mail,
And flaſh'd keen lightning from his dazzling eyes.

His hand an apple held, delicious ſight!
Not like the fruit that youthful Paris gave;
Smooth was the gloſſy rind, with vermeil bright,
Like Venus bluſhing from the ſilver wave;

Of power to cleanſe the tainted heart from ſin,
O'er the pure frame to bid corruption ceaſe,
Tune the calm thoughts to harmony within,
And ſoothe the boiling paſſions into peace.

A Bard was near; and glittering by his ſide
The Child of magic ſong, the melting Lyre;
Whoſe frame with Muſic's ſweeteſt breath ſupplied,
Wakes o'er the kindling ſoul celeſtial fire.

Awhile in converſe high the Angel Gueſt
Held him;—then ſweeping o'er the ſounding ſtrings,
Such ſtrains he pour'd, as mid the climes of reſt
Thrill the high Audience when Urania ſings.

As

As when an Hermit, whoſe ſequeſter'd cave
Deep in the ſhade of pathleſs wilds is thrown,
Sees the dim Spectre from the gloomy grave
Arouſed, and hears the more than mortal tone;

Or ardent marks ſome bright ethereal band,
That tell the wonders of the worlds above;
How Earth obedient to the great Command
Aroſe; How Angels hymn the Source of love!

Awe, Hope, and Tranſport ſeize him as he hears,
Such Paſſions roſe when firſt the Bard began,
Sung how th' Eternal form'd the rolling ſpheres,
Or ſtamp'd the breathing duſt, and call'd it *Man*.

To Heav'n high-ſoaring burſt th' exalted ſong.
Of impious deeds I heard, and dire alarms;
Two mighty hoſts I ſaw, tremendous throng!
Tower in refulgent mail, and azure arms.

Radiant

Radiant they trod in panoply divine:
Their Chiefs, dark-frowning in the van, afar
Like promontories moved:—the dreadful ſign
Was given, and ruſh'd th' angelic tribes to war.

'Twas Thou, Omnipotent! whoſe parent care
Then held each link of Nature's beauteous chain;
Elſe had yon worlds amid the fields of air
Been whirl'd, and Night reſumed her dark domain.

How ſwell'd the ſoul, as with its ſhaggy ſtore
Torn was the fix'd hill from the rocks below;
As each ſtrong arm th' inverted mountain bore,
And hurl'd th' o'erwhelming ruin on the Foe!

Not long I gazed, when down the rending ſkies
The ruſhing chariot of Jehovah came:
I ſaw the wheels, inſtinct with living eyes,
Wrapt in the Lightning's broad and ſheeted flame.

Black thunder roar'd around th' avenging God;
While on the Whirlwind's wing before Him driven,
The rebel crew beheld their dark abode,
Then roll'd wild-howling o'er the verge of Heaven.

Thus ſung the Bard; and ſtill to ſight diſplay'd,
Roſe with his ſtrain each vivid ſcene to view;
To thought ſo juſt was Fancy's powerful aid,
Her light ſo piercing, and her ſhades ſo true.

† But ſweeter lays now charm'd the wiſhing mind.
I turn'd;----and eager, as they pour'd along——
What Powers, I cried, what heavenly Powers combined,
Wind yon deep ſtream of ſoul-diſſolving ſong?

Nought

† *But ſweeter lays*, &c.] Though there are in Paradiſe Loſt many inſtances of ſmooth and melodious verſification, yet when compared with that of Shakeſpear, whoſe every ſound at moſt is modulated harmony, perhaps the reader will not judge the epithet here applied to him altogether improper.

Nought ſpoke the Goddeſs; but her arm upheld
Shew'd where a beetling cliff o'erlook'd the plain:
Bloom'd from its top each flower-enamell'd field,
And rowl'd behind the far-reſounding main.

Th' aereal foreſt clothed its ragged ſide:
Here ſpread the myrtle bower's harmonious maze;
The torrent's voice in lulling murmurs died,
And Beauty's boundleſs waſte o'erpower'd the gaze.

Of toil no trace th' untrodden wild retain'd;
But Fancy's hand the ſheltering arch had wove,
Fairer than Poet eyed, or Lover feign'd
Of clime Heſperian, or Idalian grove.

For there, obſequious to her varying call,
The Fairy region at the magic ſound,
Girt with the hanging wood, or mouldering wall,
Now bloom'd a Villa, or a Deſart frown'd.

And airy tenants o'er the dimpling ſtream
Hung looſe; or high in aim, in effort bold,
Suck'd hues ethereal from the dazzling beam,
To tinge the violet's velvet coat with gold;

Or ſpoil'd the citron of its rich perfume,
Or caught the light drop in the liquid air;
Or from the wren's breaſt pick'd the little plume,
To braid the treſſes of the Naiads hair.

O'er all bright Ariel ſhone. His devious wing
Now ſwept ſoft fragrance in the ſpicy gale;
Or fluttering from the dewy lip of Spring
Bruſh'd nectar'd balm, and ſhower'd it o'er the dale.

O'er the dim top a gloomy arbour bow'd,
The boughs dark-ſhadowing veil'd the vaulted blue;
But opening fair beneath, the viſtoed wood
Gave the gay climes that radiant burſt to view.

Here Shakeſpear ſat in regal glory bright,
And mark'd ſpontaneous flowers around him blow,
With ſcenes ſtill ſhifting ſoothed his raptured ſight,
Or drunk the muſic of the lawns below.

Graceful he moved, and ſcann'd the waſte of air,
As his ſtrong arm th' avenging bolt could wield,
Or catch the Tempeſt by the ragged hair,
Or bid an Earthquake whelm the blaſted field.

Young Fancy near her higheſt influence ſhed,
Her keen eye kindling flaſh'd the blaze of noon:
The peacock thus in glittering plumes array'd
Sails, while each orient hue reflects a Sun.

Not diſtant far another Bard was ſeen,
(The place was varied, but * their height the ſame)
Where heaved the wide deep's placid wave ſerene,
Oft ſlow, with melancholy ſtep he came. The

* *Their height the ſame.*] The author is ſufficiently aware, that by placing Oſſian in ſo exalted a ſtation, he will give offence to ſome *very critical*, and even to ſome

The Power of muſing to his thoughtful mind
Had lent her eagle pinions. O'er the main
He hung:---the Spirit of the hollow wind
Waked on his harp the long-lamenting ſtrain.

Looſe fell his hoary locks; the fanning air
Sigh'd thro' the venerable hairs;---his head
A crown adorn'd;---his ſwelling cheſt was bare;
His limbs the Warrior's rougher veſture clad.

No film o'erſhadowing dimm'd his piercing ſight,
Nor felt his vigorous form the waſte of Time;
But tall and ardent as the ſons of light,
O'er the rude beech he look'd, he trod ſublime.

ſome good-natured readers; which laſt claſs he would wiſh to pleaſe by any conceſſion in his power. The former will accuſe him of preſumption and want of all poetical taſte, for placing any Britiſh poet on a level with Shakeſpear, who has ſo long, and ſo juſtly maintained an undiſputed pre-eminence;—the latter, of partiality to a poet, who (in conformity to the abſurd diſtinction which has prevailed among *Britons* for ſome time) muſt in a peculiar ſenſe be deemed his countryman.—To the firſt of theſe he would obſerve, that his intention in placing near to each other the two greateſt natural geniuſes, of which any age or country can boaſt, is not ſo much to repreſent them as *equally excellent*, as by exhibiting them in *one view* to give the reader as juſt an idea as poſſible of their ſeparate characters. This remark

The Muſe was near, who points beyond the ſky;
Whoſe notes divine each meaner care controul,
Sail on the wings of Harmony, and high
To ſcenes all-glorious lift th' expanded ſoul.

O Goddeſs of the ſolemn mantle, hail!
Queen of the heart, who moveſt its thrilling ſtrings,
Waft'ſt rapt attention on thy wondrous tale
Beyond the little range of mortal things!

As Oſſian once, ah! let thy genial ray
Me too illumine; while to thought diſplay'd
Flit the dim ſhapes that ſhun the eye of day,
And forms that ſwim thro' pale Oblivion's ſhade.

A Maid, yet fair in Beauty's vernal bloom,
Sat on the beech with liſtening ardour near;
Her eye, like dew-drops ſpangling thro' the gloom,
Dropt, as he ſung, th' involuntary tear. Yet

remark will in a great meaſure obviate the objection of partiality, by which in the preſent caſe he ſhould be ſorry that any reader ſuppoſed him to be actuated. He gives his own opinion of the merit of Oſſian, and is incapable of this illiberal prepoſſeſſion.

Yet then no grief had touch'd the throbbing breaſt:
Pure from its influence was that ſcene refined:
But Joy's ſtrong beam the kindling ſoul confeſs'd,
Such as alone inſpires th' exalted mind.

Each Bard melodious pour'd th' alternate ſtrain:
* Ruſh'd the full tide of Shakeſpear's magic ſong,
From deſert iſles that hear the roaring main,
To climes where lightly dance th' aereal throng.

Now howl'd with ſhrieks of woe th' unbounded waſte,
Or waved the brown wood's long-bewildering maze;
Or lower'd the blackening noon by ſpells o'ercaſt,
Or bloom'd the lawn, where ſportful Fancy ſtrays;

Or Ghoſts indignant burſt the marble tomb,
Or pined in ſilent woe the drooping Maid;
Or wail'd the Lover mid the blackening gloom
With trembling lips, and call'd on death for aid. To

* *Ruſh'd the full tide*, &c.] The reader will eaſily obſerve, that the Tragedies here particularly pointed at, are The Tempeſt, The Midſummer Night's Dream, Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, and the Hiſtorical Plays.

To thrill the Murderer's ſhuddering nerves, unveil'd
Thro' Night's ſtain'd ſhade the ghaſtly Phantom ſtood;
Mutter'd his livid lips, to ſight reveal'd,
And on his rent throat hung the clotted blood.

Back ſtarts the Tyrant at the threatening nod:
His looſe teeth chatter, and his broad eyes glare:
The Furies o'er him ſhake their ſcorpion rod,
And Horror's grey hand lifts his icy hair.

I ſaw where England's awful Sovereigns roſe.
Gloomy they ſtrode along the darken'd field;
This roll'd the battle o'er his proſtrate foes,
That ſhook the burniſh'd helm and gleaming ſhield.

† Yet vain their boaſt, when at th' appointed hour
Fate wing'd the dart that lays the mighty low;
Vain was the downy couch, the roſeate bower,
To ſeal in reſt the weeping lids of Woe. Nor

† *Yet vain their boaſt*, &c.] See the celebrated Soliloquy in the ſecond part of Henry IVth. Act 3. Scene 1.

Nor themes ſublime alone employ'd his thought,
But oft gay ſcenes th' unbended mind beguiled;
Exulting Nature claim'd the finiſh'd draught,
And Care's grim front, and canker'd Envy ſmiled.

‡ But deeper plain'd the Caledonian lyre:
Slow, wild, and ſolemn, wail'd the melting lays:
Of dying groans it ſung, of combats dire,
And told the mournful tales of ancient days;

Of Ghoſts dim-gliding on the Moon's wan beam,
Of feeble ſounds that tell the Hero's doom,
Of Chiefs once famed, that o'er his midnight dream
Lower dark, and point him to the lonely tomb.

‡ *But deeper plain'd*, &c.] Offian is perhaps the only writer who is uniformly and deeply mournful in almoſt every fragment he has left us. Perhaps this was partly owing to the ſtate of ſociety at the time when he flouriſhed; partly to the gloomy train of ideas which the remembrance of departed friends excites in the mind of a perſon who has long outlived them; and principally no doubt, to that ſublime melancholy which is always the portion of exalted genius.

He ſung the narrow houſe with graſs o'ergrown,
Where oft, as Night involves the duſky ſphere,
The Spirit hovering o'er the moſs-clad ſtone
Shrieks to the Hunter's pierced and ſtartled ear.

‖ I ſaw Balclutha's towers!----No feſtive ſtrain
Of Mirth loud-echoing ſhook the vaulted hall;
But there, vain hope! to feed his clamorous train
The fearleſs fox o'erlook'd the hanging wall.

Around was Ruin, Silence, and Deſpair,
Bleak waſtes, and hills with rifted pines o'erſpread,
Th' enormous rock whoſe ragged front was bare,
And trees that nodded o'er the mighty dead.

So

‖ *I ſaw Balclutha's towers*, &c.] The author will venture to affirm, that no reader, who is endowed with poetic feeling, can read the paſſage here referred to in the poems of Oſſian, without being ſenſibly affected. An inferior painter would have fixed upon many external circumſtances, in order to convey a full idea of the deſolation which obtained in a place, once the abode of mirth and feſtivity. But how forcibly is every circumſtance recalled to the memory, and imprinted on the imagination, by the ſingle picture which Oſſian has given us of *a fox looking out of a window!*——Such is the power of a great genius. The reader who would have a compleat view of the character and merit of this eminent poet, may conſult the ingenious and elegant Diſſertation which is ſubjoined to his works.

So burſts the blaze of human pride away:
Fame, Power, and Beauty ſport one fleeting hour:
Each warm and buſtling ſpends the buſy day,
At night lies down, and ſlumbering wakes no more.

Such were his themes;——while on his cloud enſhrined
Bold Fingal ſat, in majeſty ſerene;
High o'er his airy ſword in ſtate reclined,
Each thrilling note he felt and varying ſcene.

Oft ſeem'd the tear to dim his radiant eye,
His arm upraiſed oft ſhook a meteor ſhield;
From his rent heart now burſt the pitying ſigh,
Now flamed his look indignant o'er the field.

Led by the Goddeſs of the ſtill retreat,
From the rude cliff I ſcann'd the region o'er;
Then mark'd, where temperate gales repreſs'd the heat,
One waving Villa ſtretch'd along the ſhore.

Crown'd with fair banks and intermingling flowers,
On painted beds, a variegated ſhow,
The Graces lay; while round their citron bowers
Each blooming Seaſon bade her offspring blow.

Three lovely Nymphs in ſportive train combined
I ſaw. The firſt in flowing robes was dreſs'd;
Her raven treſſes floated on the wind,
And primroſe wreaths adorn'd her ſwelling breaſt.

Warm was her cheek with Youth's inchanting bloom,
And ſhaped by Elegance her ſlender frame;
Her eyes young Beauty's ſweeteſt ſmiles illume,
And from her lips celeſtial accents came.

The crocus clothed in gold, the ſcented thyme,
The daiſy chequering o'er th' impearled ground,
Waked by the influence of that bliſsful clime,
Breathed as ſhe moved their ſoftening balm around.

In life's full prime was ſeen another Fair:
Light on a flowery couch her limbs were laid;
Her boſom looſen'd to the fanning air
Heaved ſoft, protected by the cooling ſhade.

The lawn that floating ſcreen'd its charms from view,
Slow from each orb the ſighing Gales remove;
And o'er a ſpace, pure as th' ethereal blue,
Contending Cupids waft the breath of love.

Gay Nature near her richeſt garment wore,
Robed, as when firſt in fair embroidery clad
She moved, ſupplied from Heaven's exhauſtleſs ſtore,
And radiant ſhook her nectar-dropping head.

Then ſung the morning ſtars; th' angelic Quire
Around exulting pour'd extatic lays;
Burſt the full hymn melodious from the lyre,
And hoſts rejoicing join'd the voice of praiſe.

Laſt came a Nymph of more commanding mien:
Her dimpled cheek with deep vermilion glow'd;
High was her front, exalted, yet ſerene,
And waved the ripen'd fields where'er ſhe trod.

Young Cupids o'er her play'd on purple wing;
The Breeze obſequious wanton'd in her train,
As with each Conſort knit in airy ring
She danced, and ſhower'd her treaſures o'er the plain.

No Winter here deform'd the ſmiling year,
Nor blackening cloud obſcured the genial ray;
But lays celeſtial warbled on the ear,
And the bright region felt eternal day.

A Caſtle's towering height o'erlook'd the whole,
And near, a Poet pour'd his mazy ſong;
The flame of Genius touch'd his kindling ſoul:
He ſung the Seaſons, as they ſwimm'd along.

Supine in eaſy indolence reclined,
His limbs lay liſtleſs by a purling ſtream;
The Muſe unprompted warm'd his gentle mind,
Or wrapt his ſenſes in transforming dream.

" Mark (thus he ſpoke, nor from his couch aroſe)
" O Man! how Nature paints the bluſhing flower;
" How tinged by her the rich carnation blows,
" For thee how kind ſhe weaves the woodbine bower.

" Think'ſt thou the rolling year's harmonious round,
" Yon worlds revolving on the boundleſs air,
" Thy hills with woods, thy lawns with herbage crown'd,
" That theſe proclaim no Power's ſuperior care?

" Hark from the woodland yon mellifluous ſtrains!
" The buſy people of the vocal grove,
" Soon as the grey dawn gilds th' ethereal plains,
" Hail the great Source of Beauty, Light, and Love.

" Of

" Of thee reproachful ſwells th' enlivening note:
" Shall He whoſe look ſublime beholds the ſkies,
" Shall He be mute?—Forbid it, Virtue, Thought!
" 'Tis Nature's general voice,—Ariſe! ariſe!

" Does ſtern Adverſity's corroding hand
" Thy warmth repreſs?—Its rage Eugenio knew:
" His, rich in paſture, was the ſmiling land;
" The harveſt his, wide-waving on the view.

" But Wealth avail'd not in the darkening hour;
" On airy wings away the Vagrant fled:
" The Breeze thus rifling ſpoils the wither'd flower,
" And ſpreads its honours o'er their ſimple bed.

" His blameleſs Wife, the young Dione nigh,
" Pined, the ſlow prey of life-conſuming care;
" Dim was the beam that ſparkled in her eye,
" And pale the cheek that bloom'd divinely fair.

" Two little Infants prattling by her ſide,
" From her ſoft boſom call'd the burſting groan;
" Now pleaſed with food, and now the boon denied,
" They kiſs'd her guſhing tears, or pour'd their own.

" Grief wrung the Father's heart.—Along the vale
" All deſolate he roam'd, by man unſeen:
" Oft to the waſte he told his piteous tale,
" Or wail'd dejected o'er the pathleſs green.

" Yet ſtill to Heaven reſign'd, no voice ſevere
" Accuſed the God who tames the ſtormy wave;
" Who high enthroned o'er man's inferior ſphere,
" At will reſumes th' unmeaſured gifts he gave.

" His prayer at laſt th' Eternal Father heard,
" Pitying He heard, and lent a guiding ray:
" His clouded brow returning pleaſure chear'd,
" An Angel led him where a treaſure lay.

" With

" With joy elate, he eyed the ſhining ore;
" To Heaven then ardent gave the hymn of praiſe,
" Juſt, when its wrath diſperſed his little ſtore,
" Yet kind to chaſten whom it meant to raiſe."

Thus ſung the Friend of Man. The feather'd Quire,
Still as the grove to Philomela's ſong,
Soon as low-murmuring ceaſed the vocal lyre,
Pour'd the full ſtream of ſwelling ſounds along.

Still had I liſten'd;----but the Power ſupreme
Check'd the rapt thought.---"Lo! where yon woods are ſpread,
" Where yon cool grot o'erlooks the floating ſtream,
" Mark'ſt thou the Bard that haunts yon leafy ſhade?"

I look'd:----but ah! what tranſport thrill'd the ſoul,
When (his fair margin lined with hanging wood)
I ſaw proud Thames his mazy current roll,
And on his banks another Windſor ſtood?

Yet

Yet not the ſtream which ſees Auguſta riſe,
Her ſpires high-towering o'er the ſweeping tide;
A fairer proſpect caught my wondering eyes,
And gentler ſcenes that balmy clime ſupplied.

Not here, where bloom'd whate'er the mind deſires,
Throbb'd the pale Miſer's ſickening heart for gain;
Not thro' theſe groves, where every Muſe inſpires,
The Fleet rode thundering to the ſtormy main.

* But near the grotto's deep and thoughtful gloom,
Reclined at eaſe the Bard of Windſor lay;
Behind, a ſmiling garden breathed perfume;
Rich was its robe, and ſacred from decay.

The

* *But near the grotto's*, &c.] The reader who has ſeen Mr. Pope's ſeat at Twickenham, will immediately recogniſe the objects of this deſcription. Such as have not enjoyed this pleaſure will obſerve, that it is ſituated ſo near the bank of the Thames, as that a paſſenger going up the river can at a glance ſee through the openings of the grotto into the garden to which it leads. The principal objects which attract the eye of a ſtranger, upon going through the garden, are the obeliſk which our poet has erected to the memory of his mother, and the little romantic mount which is raiſed of the ſame materials with the grotto. The obeliſk is a ſquare pillar ſhaped like a pyramid, with the following inſcription on the baſe, which ſhews in ſo amiable a light the poet's filial tenderneſs.—AH EDITHA!—

The ſpiry Obeliſk's monumental baſe
Still told the ſighing heart Editha's name;
The Mount's dark ſummit crown'd with cluſtering ſprays
Still bade his oaks preſerve the Poet's fame.

An elm's high boughs that wanton'd in the wind
Screen'd him:—the wood with acclamation rung;
While o'er the ſtream on ſapphire cars reclined,
The blue-eyed Nymphs lay liſtening as he ſung.

Of Shepherds piping o'er th' enamell'd mead,
Th' unpractiſed Fair yet innocently coy;
Of poplars bending to the tuneful reed,
Of the ſteep torrent, and deſpairing boy;

THA!—MULIERUM OPTIMA,—MATRUM AMANTISSIMA:—VALE. The mount is overſhadowed with ſome venerable old oaks, which form a receſs cool, gloomy, and ſequeſtered. It ſtands near one end of the garden, and its ſummit is incloſed in ſuch a manner as to preſent only in front, through a long viſto of trees, the ſpire of a town ſeen dimly and at a diſtance.

Of

Of Swains he told, untutor'd yet to guile,
Whoſe ſpotleſs minds ſcarce knew the taint of ſin;
To joy alive, to Love's bewitching ſmile:
Around was peace, and pleaſure all within.

But ah! on earth can Pleaſure e'er endure?
O Ye, who ardent ſearch her ſecret cell,
Ere yet roll on the dark deſponding hour,
How vain your boaſt let Eloiſa tell!

Lo! her wild ſtep, abandon'd and alone,
Roams the pale cloiſter's deſolated round;
Her tears, vain torrent! waſte the flinty ſtone,
And the long iſles with Abelard reſound.

Led by the taper's dim and flitting beam,
While fond Remembrance points the venom'd dart,
Swims the paſt hour in viſionary dream;
It fades! and Anguiſh ſtings the bleeding heart.

Nor yet to wake meek Pity's tender ſigh,
To paint ſtern Rage, or inly-waſting Woe,
His only themes:---the philoſophic eye
Serene explored the ſources whence they flow.

Of Man he ſung, as in th' aſcending ſcale
Of being placed he ſeeks a dubious road,
With impious hand would draw the ſacred veil,
That from the Creature ſcreens th' informing God.

Himſelf unknown, his towering hope aſpires,
Vain wiſh! to know what Heaven's great Sire deſign'd;
Nor ſees His Power in yon ethereal fires,
Nor marks His Wiſdom beaming in the mind.

Rough Paſſion tamed to Reaſon's ſtrong controul,
The temperate calm of cool deciding thought;
Theſe ſhew the God whoſe light illumes the ſoul,
Theſe point the deep-laid plan by Wiſdom wrought.

Let Judgment then with ſteddy hand preſide;
'Tis hers to tame rude Ire's unlicenſed groan:
Check each fell impulſe of preſumptuous Pride,
Nor, form'd by others, call their ſearch thine own.

Look round:---'Twas Inſtinct form'd the ſocial chain:
Th' induſtrious ant, the mining mole behold:
This taught thee firſt to hoard the copious grain,
And that to dig the harrow'd earth for gold.

To join thy force in firm compacted band,
Where each aſſiſts, one power protecting all,
The Bees firſt taught by Nature's great command,
And round the cloſe hive ſtretch'd the circling wall.

Deem'ſt thou, proud worm! the fix'd decrees of Fate
For thee bid Joy awake, or Beauty ſhine?
The linnet ſporting with his tuneful mate
Shares ſweeter hope, and purer loves than thine.

Art thou the Lord of Nature's wide domains?
On nought beneath depends thy boaſted crown?
Ere truth confirm the plea thy pride maintains,
—Go give the Gooſe her feather and her down.

Know Heaven's great ſyſtem marks a general end:
Each gains of pleaſure his proportion'd ſhare;
Theſe in the ſcale advance, and thoſe deſcend,
Each boon ſtill balanced by its weight of care.

All ſpeak th' Eternal's wiſdom, bounty, power;
Great in the means, impartial in the doom!
Theirs is the preſent inoffenſive hour,
And † thine the hope that points beyond the tomb.

† *Thine the hope*, &c.] In the account here given of the writings of Pope, the author hath mentioned only thoſe pieces, which entitle him to the character of a deſcriptive, or philoſophical poet. His ſatires and tranſlations are therefore omitted. The Rape of the Lock deſerved indeed particular notice; but a full detail of its merit would have led the author into a train of images, which might have been deemed improper in a work profeſſedly ſerious, and a curſory view, unequal to its excellence. For a ſimilar reaſon the name of Addiſon is not taken notice of. This great man cannot claim, as *a Poet*, that high ſtrain of panegyric, to which he is entitled as an *Eſſayiſt*, and *a Critic*. The author therefore rather choſe to ſay nothing of him, than to make a faint encomium on ſo eminent a writer.

Such

Such was the moral lay; though bold, refined:
Clear, full, melodious was each ſwelling note:
Calm Reaſon's force, with ‡ plaſtic Fancy join'd,
Gave the ripe growth of ſtrong and manly thought.

Still glow'd new proſpects on my wondering gaze,
But diſtant now the glimmering ſcenes were view'd;
The tower ſcarce trembled thro' the noon-day blaze,
And the tall Foreſt touch'd the flaming cloud. Yet

‡ *Plaſtic fancy*, &c.] That Pope joined to a clear and penetrating judgment the force of a creative imagination, is (in the author's opinion) clear from almoſt every part of his writings. It is ſtrange, that the perſons who will not allow him any extenſive ſhare of this laſt faculty, ſhould yet make ſuch high encomiums on his Windſor Foreſt, his Rape of the Lock, and his Eloiſa to Abelard. The ſubjects of his didactic writings do not admit of that rich painting and exuberant imagery, which are conſpicuous in the others; but it does not ſurely follow, (even ſuppoſing Pope never to have wrote a poem purely deſcriptive) that becauſe a writer makes choice of ſuch a ſubject, and treats it with judgment, he is diſqualified *merely on that account*, to do juſtice to another which requires imagination. Beſides, it is an unqueſtionable truth, that an author who is capable of painting with ſtrength and variety at one time, may be able to diſplay the ſame talent on a ſimilar ſubject at another.——With what propriety then can the poet, who (to uſe the words of a late ingenious critic) throws out images "which are truly ſublime and "ſtrongly conceived, who adopts the ſtrongeſt and boldeſt epithets in the Engliſh "language, who by uniting the richeſt fancy with the moſt delicate ſatire, ſur-"paſſeth even the excellence of Shakeſpear*;" with what propriety can ſuch a poet be ſaid to have poſſeſſed only a moderate ſhare of that faculty, to which he was indebted for this juſt encomium?—The learned and elegant critic who writes in this manner, ought rather to have regretted, that Pope did not always make choice of ſubjects which were ſuited to the ſublimity of his genius, than to have aſked in one part of his work, "what there is very ſublime, or very pathetic†" in

* See an Enquiry into the Writings and Genius of Pope.
† Id. Dedication to Dr. Young.

an

Yet ſtill inſatiate, the delighted eye
O'er each ſoft ſhade with pleaſing wonder ran:
The Power whoſe rapt ſoul ſcans the boundleſs ſky,
Indulged my hope, and gentle thus began.

" Amid yon woodland's deep and ſtill retreat,
" Yon haunts that breathe of ſolitude and love,
" Bards yet unſeen their tender tales repeat,
" And melting muſic ſteals along the grove.

" Yon lawn thou ſeeſt, with rich incloſures crown'd;
" Not rude, but * rear'd in haſte its fruits appear:
" See, noxious weeds o'er-run the fertile ground,
" And blight the promiſe of the ſmiling year.

an author, from whoſe writings he has extracted ſuch pregnant examples of pathos and ſublimity.

* *Rear'd in haſte*, &c.] This deſcription of Dryden's ſituation alludes to the haſte, and incorrect manner in which he was often compelled to write by the moſt powerful of all inducements, I mean that of indigence.

" Yet

" Yet far the worth that little fault o'erpays:
" Spring robes the mead, and fragrance ſcents the air,
" With golden fruitage gleam the bending ſprays,
" And blooms the verdant dale profuſely fair.

" 'Tis Dryden there, that ſweeps the trembling ſtrings.
" Dim by yon ſpreading pine thou ſee'ſt him ſtand:
" Hark! the wild woods loud echoing as he ſings!
" The lyre reſounding owns a Maſter's hand.

" From ſong to ſong, from theme to theme convey'd,
" He thrills, exalts, tranſports, o'erwhelms the ſoul;
" His lays with ſuch perſuaſive ardour plead,
" Such rapid lightning whirls him to the goal.

" Nor bluſh, great Bard, that in thy glorious flight
" Thine eye o'erlook'd what meaner minds ſurvey:
" A Fly can mark what 'ſcapes an Eagle's ſight,
" When ſhrined ſublime amid the blaze of day.

" Light as the ſteed that bounds along the plain,
" The heav'n-bred Genius darts to reach its aim:
" Behind, the leaden, dull, dejected train
" Creep on, and fearful ſtart, but miſs the game.

" Beyond him far, ſcarce thro' the opening wood
" Thou mark'ſt yon mount that ſpeaks the Maſter's ſkill;
" Half-ſeen, it mixes with the azure flood:----
" There reigns the ſweet-tongued Bard of Cooper's Hill.

" Still like yon ſtream, ſmooth, eaſy, clear, ſerene,
" Strong, yet harmonious, ſwell th' inſtructive lays;
" The tree that ſhades, the flower that paints the ſcene,
" Each to the mind ſome moral truth conveys.

" In each young bud that decks the ſhaded vale,
" Preſumptuous Man! thy fleeting life behold:
" See it unfolding to the vernal gale!
" Lo Summer tips its glittering leaves with gold!

" Like

" Like thine its florid prime, its early doom,
" Its velvet robe, its gay reſplendent dies;
" But froſts untimely nip the withering bloom,
" It droops, declines, and all its beauty flies.

" So flies thy youth, a vain deluding dream;
" Vain, but when Virtue points to joy refined,
" Pours thro' the gloom her bold enlivening beam,
" And warms with future hope th' exulting mind.

" Such is his ſtrain; while near a bubbling ſpring,
" Screen'd by the mournful yew's projected ſhade,
" Rapt Cowley liſtening hears the Poet ſing,
" And ſighing lifts his melancholy head.

" Sweet Bard! But * form'd for ſolitude and eaſe,
" Why toil'd thy ſtep where ſtorms and tempeſts rave?
" Thine were the arts that ſoften, while they pleaſe;
" Let others ride the black tumultuous wave. " See,

* *Form'd for ſolitude*, &c.] Cowley, with a diſpoſition formed to enjoy with exquiſite reliſh the pleaſures of retirement, was thrown by the accidents of life into

" See, thro' the depth of yonder winding maze,
" Where Waller, bleſt with Sacchariſſa's charms,
" Now eyes her kindling with delighted gaze,
" Or claſps the ſmiling Beauty in his arms.

" Let theſe awake thy feeling heart to love:
" See o'er her neck the gloſſy locks deſcend:
" Serene ſhe moves, the Goddeſs of the grove,
" Or ſinks reclined on her protecting Friend.

" O bleſt! whom Fancy from the buſtling crew
" Selects, and grants to raiſe th' inſpiring ſong:
" To theſe great Nature points each happier view,
" To theſe her firſt, her higheſt cares belong.

" To touch the ſtring that vibrates to the heart,
" To mark each line more exquiſitely fair,
" To feel each nicer ſtroke of mimic Art,
" The juſteſt ſite, the moſt enlivening air, " She

the world, and after labouring for many years very effectually in the ſervice of his country, without obtaining the reward due to his merit, integrity, and diligence, ſpent the laſt years of his life in an obſcure ſolitude, from which he could never be prevailed upon to return to a court.

" She gives---The favour'd charge to Me conſign'd,
" Then ſcans his Parent's work minutely o'er :
" What joy then opens on the wondering mind !
" How rapt, when Science ſpreads her treaſured ſtore !

" I rear the Stranger with a Parent's ſkill ;
" I give with warmth the conſcious cheek to glow,
" Curb each ſtrong effort of the headlong will,
" And thrill the breaſt with ſympathetic woe.

" Oft at the ſtill and ſilent hour of eve,
" I meet him poring by the darkſome cell,
" Beneath whoſe arch, unknowing to deceive
" Meek Hope, and dove-eyed Peace delight to dwell.

" There to his mind I point the paths of Truth ;
" There ſhew the faults of each uncertain plan,
" Raze the light follies of preſumptuous youth,
" And in his boſom plant the love of man.

" For know, where'er the Muſes deign to ſmile,
" Their ſofteſt balm the milder Paſſions ſhower;
" Warm is th' ingenuous wiſh, untouch'd by guile,
" The ſoul all gentle, feeling, tender, pure.

" Thus form'd to Virtue, as inſpired to ſing,
" When from the courts of bright and boundleſs day
" They come,---theſe lawns that breathe perpetual Spring,
" Theſe bowers of Pleaſure wake th' unprompted lay."

* Here ceaſed the Power:---but to th' enraptured ear
Such notes her ſoft perſuaſive voice convey'd,
As to the Saint ſome whiſpering Angels bear.---
I pauſed, and thus in fainter accents ſaid:

" Ah!

* *Here ceaſed the Power.*] Having now compleated the principal deſign of this work, by exhibiting to view the characters and diſtinguiſhing excellencies of the moſt eminent Britiſh poets, it may not be improper to conſider the encouragement which theſe illuſtrious writers, the ornaments of the ages in which they wrote, and the admiration of poſterity, received from their countrymen. —— The eminent merit of Chaucer, though he lived in a barbarous and illiterate age, procured him a powerful and generous patron in John Duke of Lancaſter, who recommended this *grete Clerke* to Edward III. during whoſe reign he was raiſed to dignity and opulence. Involved in the fate of his patron, he was ſtript of all his employments in the ſucceeding reign, and was compelled to wander in a foreign country a wretched and needy fugitive. He returned indeed in his old age, but was never reſtored

" Ah! grant me, Goddeſs, in this calm retreat,
" Far from the haunt of buſy man, to roam:
" Ah! grant to Life's weak bark, by tempeſts beat,
" So bleſt a refuge, ſo ſecure an home.

" To

reſtored to the royal favour, and at laſt died in obſcurity. — Spencer was ſtill more unfortunate than his predeceſſor. Perſecuted by the Lord Treaſurer Burleigh from his firſt appearance at the court of Elizabeth, he paid a long and fruitleſs attendance on *the Great*, an attendance, in certain circumſtances, of all others the moſt diſagreeable to an elegant and ſenſible mind; and deprived at laſt of an eſtate, which he obtained in Ireland, by the rebellion of the Earl of Deſmond, he returned to his native country, and died of a broken heart. —— Shakeſpear born of parents, who were unable to diſcover the propenſity of his genius, was deprived of the advantages of a liberal education, and raiſed himſelf to notice by the force of his uncultivated and inimitable genius. Unſupported by a patron, he entered into a company of players; and might have died in indigence and obſcurity like his predeceſſors, had he not acquired an independent fortune by his writings. —— The fate of Cowley we have already mentioned, and that of Milton is well known. Denham and Waller were happy in being poſſeſſed of eſtates, which deſcended from their anceſtors.——Poſterity will obſerve with indignation, that the faults which are ſo conſpicuous in the writings of Dryden were occaſioned by the two greateſt obſtructions to every noble effort of the human mind, — want and dependence. The former compelled him to ſuppreſs the exertions of his own genius, that he might pleaſe the taſte of a corrupted age; the latter cruſhed the powers of his imagination, and limited the freedom of his ſentiments.——Thomſon had indeed the good fortune to be patronized by ſome men of taſte and genius, who rendered his life eaſy, and did honour to his memory. Pope, like Shakeſpear, purchaſed independence by the ſale of his works. Such has been the fate of ſome of the greateſt geniuſes, of whom any age or country can reaſonably boaſt. Let us not however be ſo partial as to aſcribe this ſeries of unhappy events altogether to ingratitude, or even to the *bad taſte* of a rude and undiſtinguiſhing people. Calm reflection will ſuggeſt other, and perhaps juſter cauſes, from which theſe effects may be traced. The talents which form an accompliſhed writer, and thoſe which qualify a man for riſing in life, are in themſelves *eſſentially different*, and are very ſeldom united in any one perſon. Indeed, it is ſcarce poſſible that this union can take place, unleſs in ſome very uncommon and particular inſtances. The man of letters is formed in ſolitude; the man of the world, in ſociety. It is evident, that before theſe can be properly blended, an affluent fortune muſt concur with na-

" To ſearch, to mark, to ſeize the glittering ſpoil,
" Let theſe the Miſer's low-born thought employ:
" But ſay, what prize rewards the Muſe's toil?
" Yields her ſuperior aim th' expected joy?

" Ah no! Pale Envy's green and baleful eye
" Blights the rich wreath around her temples twined;
" Or Want forbids her moulted wings to fly,
" Or Care's bleak mildews damp th' aſpiring mind.

" Unfit to ſoothe mean Pride's preſumptuous ſcheme,
" Untaught ſoft Flattery's ſmooth and guileful art;
" On Guilt's dark ſhrine to pour the Muſe's beam,
" Or mimic Gladneſs with a burſting heart;

tive genius, and with a diſpoſition ſuited to make a moderate uſe both of ſolitude and ſociety. Where theſe advantages do not meet together, the man of letters becomes proud, ſullen, reſerved, from the inward conſciouſneſs of ſuperior merit, joined with little experience of life or manners; and thus the diſagreeable companion effaceth the impreſſion which is made by the writer. Diffidence and Modeſty, which are likewiſe the attendants of Genius, however amiable in themſelves, are yet by no means calculated to render their poſſeſſor opulent. They are ſhades indeed, which heighten the graces of merit to the diſcerning;—but they are ſhades likewiſe, which conceal it from the giddy and ſuperficial. If we add to theſe cauſes the envy which eminence in any profeſſion naturally excites, we ſhall account, at leaſt in a great meaſure, for the narrow and contracted circumſtances, in which men of genius are permitted to live.

" To

" To check th' indignant glance, when wanton Power,
" Throned on the mouldering wrecks ſhe joys to raiſe,
" Rifles deſponding Virtue's little ſtore,
" Or pines when Truth confers th' impartial praiſe:

" Theſe arts unknown, ah! in the peaceful grot,
" Where ſleeps meek Innocence, a blameleſs gueſt,
" Calm let me ſit, from life's vain ſcenes remote,
" And weary preſs the downy couch of Reſt."

With pity trembling o'er her placid mien,
With looks that bade each meaner care ſubſide,
Indulgent near me ſmiled the lonely Queen,
And lenient thus with ſoothing voice replied.

" Then would'ſt thou quit the poſt aſſign'd by Heaven,
" To ſpend thy years in liſtleſs eaſe away?
" Marks not thy thought, by lawleſs frenzy driven,
" Truth's form divine, and Judgment's guiding ray?

" Not thus the train who haunt theſe bliſsful bowers:
" Like thee on Life's tumultuous ocean caſt,
" They broke the billows with collected powers,
" Look'd to the future, nor deplored the paſt.

" Was Virtue's prize an unſubſtantial name,
" Not then had Hope impatient eyed the goal;
" Nor Heaven with ſtrength had ſteel'd the manly frame,
" Nor placed the lamp of Reaſon in the ſoul.

" 'Tis Man's, ere yet th' important end is gain'd,
" His poſt to guard, to ſtrengthen, to defend:
" Wretch, deem'd by Wiſdom for thyſelf ordain'd,
" Know'ſt thou the ties of Brother or of Friend?

" Though born to bear, 'tis not thy taſk alone:
" See, even thy Foe participates the care:
" Pale in thy lowering fate he marks his own.
" Thus all combine to ſoothe, and one to ſhare.

" As thus thy ſorrow claims another's aid,
" Thy daring deed another's ſmile repays;
" Tell, when th' embattled legion ſtands diſplay'd,
" Will he who ſtorms the ranks diſdain the praiſe?

" Whence is Ambition's bold and noble aim?
" Why leaps th' impaſſion'd breaſt at Glory's call?
" Why fluttering pants the beating heart for fame,
" If Joy, to one confined, regards not all?

" Thus All connected form the ſocial band:
" With Nature's birth th' important league began;
" Who breaks its law diſclaims th' Almighty hand,
" That world to world conjoin'd, and Man to Man.

" Yet ruſh not headlong to the worſe extreme;
" Nor form'd for life, be Solitude unſought:
" Mine is the gentle, yet the piercing beam,
" That opes the buds of ſlow progreſſive thought.

" When Paſſion ſhoots her lightning from the eye,
" I curb the Fury in her wild career;
" Or, as the thrill'd heart heaves the pitying ſigh,
" Bid Reaſon whiſper to the liſtening ear.

" She, meek-eyed Queen, to calm th' internal war,
" Serenely mild, aſſumes her awful throne:
" O'erawed, th' inferior Powers attend her bar;
" Even Rage reluctant checks his burſting groan.

" Chain'd at her foot impetuous Frenzy lies,
" Fell Envy gnaws her rankling lips in vain;
" Hate from her graſp unlocks th' arreſted prize,
" And Rancour muttering churns the galling rein.

" When Night o'erſhadowing lulls the world to reſt,
" Oft to my cell her graceful ſteps are borne;
" There, like the orient ſtar that gilds the eaſt,
" She pours the ſoft effuſive rays of morn.

" Her ſtep purſue thro' Life's perplexing road,
" Cool'd, when ſhe calls each murmuring plaint to ceaſe:
" Her voice exalts th' illumined ſoul to God;
" She walks with Nature, and her paths are peace.

" Thus taught, when Earth reclaims its kindred clay,
" When Death's long ſleep diſſolves thy mortal frame;
" Here may'ſt thou reſt, while ſome melodious lay
" In tuneful notes conſigns thy praiſe to fame:

" That not by Envy ſtain'd, nor duped by Pride,
" That not o'erpower'd by Fancy's dazzling beam;
" Still prone to ſoften where thou could'ſt not hide,
" Calm thought o'erlook'd, as Nature ſketch'd thy theme."

She ſaid,—and gradual from the ſight withdrew:
Weak as the murmur of the dying gale,
Stole her laſt breath, while on th' unbended view
Ruſh'd the dark wood, and ſolitary dale.

To the Memory of the late Right Honourable
JAMES, Earl of FINDLATER and SEAFIELD,
Lord Vice-Admiral of Scotland, &c. &c.

HARK! yon deep groan!—It ſpeaks the laſt farewel:
Fled is the Spirit from its mortal frame:
The bars are burſt, and from the darkſome cell
Eſcaped, it joins the God from whom it came.

Death, ſolemn Meſſenger! unawed by power,
Deaf to the mournful plaint, or tuneful lay,
Soon as dark-lowering comes th' appointed hour,
Lops the weak ſprings of guſhing life away.

Had Wealth avail'd, or Art's aſſiduous care,
At Virtue's call did lingering years return;
Not then the throbbing heart had felt deſpair,
Nor plain'd the Muſe o'er SEAFIELD's peaceful urn.

Not then had Memory's tearful eye ſurvey'd
Each paſt indulgence; nor the plaintive ſtrain
Flow'd wild, as Fancy mark'd the deepening ſhade,
And Thought pronounced all human grandeur vain.

O pure of manners, and of ſoul ſincere!
Bleſt with the warmeſt heart, the gentleſt mind;
Who ne'er unpitying ſaw'ſt the ſtarting tear,
But felt'ſt for worth, for virtue, for mankind.

Nor thine to feel another's woes alone:
(Thought ſpeaks the God within; to feel, the man)
On each warm wiſh informing Reaſon ſhone,
And wrought thy temperate life's conſiſtent plan.

Ah! what avails that ſkill'd in claſſic lore,
Art had refined what bounteous Nature gave?
Have theſe, preſumptuous hope! have theſe the power
To lock the chambers of the gloomy grave?

The hand that Virtue's timid wiſh ſupplied,
The eye uncaught by Pleaſure's gilded lure;
The heart by guile unſtain'd, untouch'd by pride:
Theſe but inflame the grief they ought to cure.

Vain even Religion, when th' unerring dart
Conſigns her votaries to the ſilent tomb:
Vain is the aid her glorious views impart;
Still weeps weak Pity o'er th' untimely doom.

Not all thy virtues in thy race beheld,
To Reaſon's voice ſubdue ſtrong Nature's call;
Thought marks the Good, on Life's extended field
A Few; and Paſſion mourns them as they fall.

The Muſe alone, as down the tide of Time
Sweeps man's frail race, ſelects each nobler name;
Sees Virtue ſoaring to an happier clime,
Marks her long flight, and gives her deeds to Fame.

She (yet in Flattery's ſoothing arts unſkill'd)
O'er SEAFIELD's tomb ſhall ſtrew th' unfading bay;
Her trembling lyre its ſweeteſt note ſhall yield,
And o'er his memory pour this grateful lay:

Here reſts (let PRIDE's reluctant ear attend!)
Whom title ne'er ſeduced, nor grandeur moved;
Unblamed alike as Huſband, Father, Friend;
In death lamented, as in life beloved.

FINIS.